

S.N. 09/431,760
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ATTY. DKT. 65502-273329

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please replace claim 18 with:

16. A method of searching a data set comprising.

organizing concepts according to their meaning into a lexicon, said lexicon defining elements of a semantic space,

providing a first meaning differentiator in response to an input query, wherein said first meaning differentiator is a set of concepts from said lexicon that represent a first location of said query in the semantic space,

providing a second meaning differentiator for each element of a target data set, wherein said second meaning differentiator is a set of concepts from said lexicon that represent a second location of said target data element in the semantic space;

B1 determining a semantic distance from the first meaning differentiator to the second meaning differentiator, wherein the semantic distance is calculated by evaluating steps along a semantic path between the first meaning differentiator and the second meaning differentiator and applying a dynamic scaling factor to a perceived distance of each step along the semantic path according to the types of relationships followed, directionality of the relationships and changes in direction along the semantic path, and number of competing relationships followed at each step, and

presenting results of a search conducted on the target data set for target data elements close in meaning to an input query, wherein the closeness in meaning is determined by the semantic distance between the first meaning differentiator for said input query and the second meaning differentiator for each target data element.

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